

Staff Summary

The Committee was asked to discuss three topics:

1. Identify missing issues from the charges contained in the study authorizing language, SB 5441.
2. What are the key issues to focus on?
3. What are transition issues we could focus on early in our study work?

Here is a summary of the discussions. Please note that the numbering of the items is not to represent any priority but to make it easier to refer to the items during subsequent discussion.

MAJOR PRIORITY ISSUES

1. A communication strategy is important and should begin as soon as possible so that people are informed about the issues and the work of this effort.
2. We know that schools are different and it would be valuable to learn about the different decisions districts and schools have made as to how they spend their resources in our current system.
3. It is possible to make some progress in transition issues in the 2006 session:
 - Dual credit in high schools
 - Universal preschools
 - Running start for apprenticeships

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS (CLARIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS) RELATED TO SB 5441

1. K-12 need to have a focus on transition to higher education or the workplace and lifelong learning;. Each stage of our system needs to be “planting seeds” - providing the base for student’s growth in their next steps.
2. We need to be sure that our system has effective metrics for students and teachers; be sure we are measuring what we want to measure. Example: student achievement.
3. Investigating incentives for performance and accountability is missing in the K-12 charges.
4. Early learning seeks to increase meaningful parental participation starting in pre-Kindergarten. This should be incorporated into the K-12 system to be an integral part of the system’s work.
5. When addressing the charge of helping students to stay in school an assumption should not be made that is too narrow as to the students this addresses. The goal is have school meaningful for all students - gifted students, academically challenged, hands-on learners, etc.
6. Consideration should be made for creating additional opportunities for students to learn. Before and after school programs, summer programs, and other ways to create more quality learning time should be examined.

7. Our K-12 programs should be well-rounded; more than focusing exclusively on "the basics."
8. Do a better job of identifying the role of the paraeducator and then identify essential skill sets; provide opportunities for skill development.
9. Increase and improve career counseling, especially in middle school. We need to develop our system to help students make connections between school and what students think they want to do after they leave the K-12 system.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

1. Create benchmarks for comparisons that clearly identify what we want to know and measure.
2. Create base case scenario (define the crisis). If we continue with the resources currently available, what is possible and what is not to accomplish/provide.
3. Committee members want a grounding in how the system currently works and how the structures and financial mechanisms create certain responses. Examine formulas and the outcomes they are driving; compare various district responses.
4. Committee members are interested in examining pay structures, incentives and how these issues relate to attracting a diverse teaching force. Look at COL adjustments, shortage areas such as mathematics and science instruction.

GENERAL FINANCE AND POLICY BACKGROUND

1. Identify the impact of unfunded mandates; refrain from creating more during this work.
2. The goal of the K-12 system has moved beyond creating an opportunity to learn for our students. The goal is now to ensure and expect all students meet and exceed standards. We should be real about what the goal is and what it takes. (A 21st century definition of basic education)